

WASHINGTON - An amendment introduced by leading House Republican centrists and conservatives that would control spending and reform the budget process was ruled not in order last night in the House Rules Committee. U.S. Reps. Mark Kirk (R-IL), Charlie Dent (R-PA), Jeb Hensarling (R-TX) and Mike Pence (R-IN) introduced the amendment for the Democrat's budget resolution, H. Con. Res. 99, on Tuesday.

"In 2006, federal debt ballooned to \$3 trillion," said Congressman Kirk. "This year's interest payments on our debt alone will top \$200 billion – nearly 10 percent of total government spending. The Democrats are only continuing this trend. We saw more than \$21 billion in non-emergency, pork-barrel spending in the emergency supplemental spending bill, and \$24 billion more in non-defense discretionary funds in the current budget resolution. Only through common-sense reforms, such as discretionary spending limits, entitlement spending growth restrictions and the reinstitution of the presidential line-item veto can we avoid the looming deficits that will cripple Social Security and hold future Congresses hostage to draconian budget cuts."

The Republican consensus amendment requires the Budget Committee to hold hearings on budget reform options and introduce legislation by Sept. 30, 2007 that includes the following provisions:

- 1) Statutory discretionary spending limits.
- 2) Provisions to slow the growth of entitlement spending by requiring offsets for new benefits, and examining programs with annual increases higher than the rate of inflation.
- 3) Presidential legislative line-item veto authority – something requested by both President Bush and President Clinton – but one that preserves Congress' constitutional power of the purse by requiring an expedited up or down vote on the President's proposals.
- 4) Enforcement tools that restrict the definition of "emergency" so that emergency supplemental appropriation bills include only needs that are sudden, urgent, unforeseen, unpredictable, unanticipated and temporary in nature.
- 5) Accrual accounting of the Government's long-term obligations.
- 6) Periodic reporting from the Government Accountability Office that examines the causes of long-term deficits and present options to reduce these deficits.
- 7) Annual audit summaries from the Federal Accounting Standards Advisory Board for all departments of the Government that represent more than 20 percent of discretionary spending, with recommendations on how to improve the quality of financial information available to Congress.

“Until we address the systemic flaws in how we do business as a nation, we perform a disservice to all taxpayers as stewards of their money,” said Congressman Kirk. “This Amendment deserves consideration on the House floor – anything less is a tacit acceptance of spiraling debts and out-of-control spending.”